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A RAGGEDY MAN.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Oh, the Raggedy Man! He works for Pa;
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!
He comes to our house every day,
An' waters the horses an' reods 'em hay;
An' he opens the shed—an' we all 1st laugh
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf!
An' nen, ef our hired girl says he can,
He milks the cow for 'Lizabuth Ann.
Ain't he a awful good Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, the Raggedy Man—he's 1st so good
He splits the kindlin' and chops the wood;
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,
An' does most things 'at boys can't do.
He clumbed clean up in our big tree
An' shook a apple down for me!
An' 'nother 'n', too, fer Lizabuth Ann!
An' 'nother 'n', too, for the Raggedy Man!
Ain't he a awful kind Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' the Raggedy Man he knows most rhymes
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes—
Knows 'about Giunts, an' Griffuns, 'an Elves,
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers their-selves!
An' wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can
Turn into me—er 'Lizabuth Ann!
Ain't he a funny old Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time, when he
Was makin' a little bow-'n'-arry fer me,
Says, "When you're big like pa is,
Air you go' to keep a fine store like his,
An' be a rich mercheunt, an' wear fine clothes?
Er what air you go' to be, goodness knows!"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says, "'em go' to be a Raggedy Man—
I'm 1st go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!
—*Century.*

WINNING A WIDOW.

"Jotham!" quoth Mr. Wiggleton, to his chief farm hand.

"Well, what's wantin'?" lazily responded Jotham Hardcastle, with a half-masticated straw between his teeth, as he looked up from the bit of harness he was mending.

"The Widow Plamleaf has taken the cottage at the foot of the lane."

"Tell me something I didn't know afore," said Jotham, with more freedom than reverence in his manner.

"And if she sends up to borrow the rake, or the hoe, or the spade—"

"Well, what then?"

"Tell her she can't have 'em. Women are always borrowing. I knew Hobart Palmleaf when he was alive; he was a chronic borrower. I don't want anything to do with his widow."

"All right," observed Jotham, philosophically, and his master resumed the perusal of his newspaper once more.

"Jotham?" said Mr. Wiggleton, about ten days afterward, as he came in heated and out of breath from a walk. (Mr. Wiggleton wasn't as spry as he had been before his five-and-fortieth birthday and the Locust Hill was a pretty steep ascent.)

"Well, what now?"

"I wonder if that was the Widow Plamleaf I saw gathering blackberries into a basket by the south wall of the cottage garden?"

"Kind o' slim and tall?"

"Yes."

"Blue eyes, and hair as shiny as satin?"

"Yes."

"And a little white parasol, lined with pink?"

"Yes."

"Reckon likely it was," said Jotham.

"But," persisted the puzzled landowner, "she doesn't look at all like a widow."

"There's as much difference in widows as there is in other folks," observed Jotham, dryly.

Mr. Wiggleton was silent for a minute or two.

"Jotham!" he finally said.

"Well?"

"Has she sent to borrow anything?"

"Sent yesterday forenoon—asked if we had a screw-driver to lend—the hinge was comin' loose on the garden gate."

"And what did you tell her?"

"Said my order was contrary wise to lendin' or borrowin'."

"Jotham, you are a fool."

"'Tain't the first time you've said so, and 'tain't the first time you've been wrong," said Jotham, with a calmness of demeanor that was beautiful to behold. "Hard words is considered in the wages, and I ain't the man to find fault. I only did as you told me."

"Yes, but Jotham, never mind, the next time she sends, let her have whatever she wants."

"Said somethin' about wantin' a man to come and hoe them early potatoes. Be I to go?"

"Certainly—of course. Neighbors should act like neighbors, especially in the country."

And Mr. Wiggleton sighed and wished that he was not too corpulent and unused to labor to hoe the Widow Palmleaf's early potatoes himself.

But he did the next best thing; he went over to look at the field after Jotham had hoed it, and gave the widow good advice concerning a certain rocky up-hill bit of sheep pasture that belonged to the cottage.

"I'd lay that down in winter rye, if I were you, ma'am," said Mr. Wiggleton.

"I am so much obliged to you," said the widow, sweetly. "Since poor, dear Hobart was taken away I have no one to advise me on these subjects."

And Mr. Wiggleton thought how soft and pretty her blue eyes looked as she spoke.

"Oh, pshaw!" said Jotham, leaning on the handle of his hoe, "winter rye ain't the sort o' crop for that spot. Spring wheat's the only thing to grow there."

"Hold your tongue, Jotham!" cried his employer, testily.

"Yes, sir, I will," said Jotham, with a broad grin over Mr. Wiggleton's shining bald head.

"And about these hyacinth beds, ma'am," said the latter, recovering his equanimity, "I'll come over this evening, if you will allow me—"

"I shall be delighted," interrupted the widow, with a smile that showed a set of teeth as white and regular as pearls.

"This evening, ma'am," repeated Mr. Wiggleton, with a bow, "and we'll sketch out a diagram. Hyacinths have to be humored, Mrs. Palmleaf."

"So I have always heard," said the widow.

That evening, after Mr. Wiggleton had returned from discussing the momentous question of sandy soil, bulbous roots and cresents and circles, he found Jotham on the front porch, contentedly breathing the flower-scented air.

"A very prtety woman, that Mrs. Palmleaf, Jotham," said the employer; not because there was any special congeniality of soul between himself and his farm hand, but because he could have talked to the gate posts if Jotham hadn't happened to be there.

"Well, nobody doubts that, as I ever heerd on," said Jotham, with his elbows on his knees and his face turned complacently toward the full moon.

"And she can't be over thirty."

"So I should a-said myself," assented Jotham.

"I'm glad she has taken the cottage on a long lease, Jotham," pursued Mr. Wiggleton, "I like good neighbors."

"Most folks does," observed Jotham.

And he got up, shaking himself like a great Newfoundland dog, leaving Mr. Wiggleton to the companionship of his own cogitations. There are times in which solitude is said to be the best company; perhaps this was one of these special occasions, in the estimation of Jotham Hardcastle.

The summer went by; the great maple in front of the Wiggleton mansion began to glow as if its leaves had been dipped in blood and melted gold the asters reared their purple torches along the stone wall by the cottage under the hill, and any acute observer might have perceived that Mrs. Palmleaf had laid down the rocky bit of up-hill ground in spring wheat instead of winter rye.

"Jotham!" said Mr. Wiggleton to his farm hand one evening; it was the first they had had a fire on the wide, old-fashioned hearth.

"Well?"

"I—have concluded it isn't best for you to live here at the house any longer."

"What's goin' to happen?" said Jotham. "You ain't goin' to hire another hand be you?"

"No; to be sure not. You suit me admirably, Jotham, only—" and Mr. Wiggleton shot the words out with an effort, "I am thinking of getting married."

"Oh!"

"It's rather late in life, to be sure," said Mr. Wiggleton, conscious of looking extremely sheepish; "but you know, Jotham, it's never too late to do a good thing."

"Certainly not."

"You ought to get married, Jotham," added his employer, speaking in rather a rapid and embarrassed manner.

"Think so?"

"Certainly. You might live in the little house beyond the peach orchard; it wouldn't take much to fit it nicely, now that paint and paper are so cheap."

Jotham stared reflectively at the fire.

"And your wife could take care of the cream and butter, for us. It isn't likely Mrs. P. —ahem!—it isn't likely, I mean, that my wife will care for such things."

"Humph!"

"I'd advise you to turn the thing all over in your mind, Jotham," said Mr. Wiggleton.

"Yes, I will," said Jotham, with a little cough.

The next morning Mr. Wiggleton attired himself in his best suit, and went to the cottage.

Mrs. Palmleaf received him in a charming wrapper with ribbon to match.

Mr. Wriggleton wasted no time in useless preliminary chit-chat.

"Mrs. Plamleaf, ma'am," he began, a little nervously, "I have concluded to change my condition."

"Indeed!" said the widow, smiling like an opening rose. "I am so glad to hear it."

"And I am here this morning to ask you to be my wife!" pursued our hero boldly.

"You are kind, sir," said Mrs. Plamleaf, blushing, and looking prettier than ever, "but I—I really couldn't."

"And why not?" demanded Mr. Wiggleton, fairly taken aback by this unexpected answer.

"I am engaged!" owned up the charming widow, playing with the ribbons at her belt.

"Might I dare to ask—that is—"

"Oh, certainly. It's Jotham Hardcastle."

Mr. Wiggleton stammered out a sentence or two of congratulation, and took his leave.

And when the "spring wheat" reared its green tassels on the hillside, Jotham married the pretty young widow, and Mr. Wiggleton's single yet. He always felt as if he had been ill treated, but he never could tell exactly how.

The Other Side.

Jared Lincoln, an uneducated man, who had made within a few years a large fortune by speculation, while driving out to Central Park passed Mr. Crounse, a plainly dressed, middle-aged gentleman who was on foot.

"That man," he said to his wife, "belongs to one of the oldest families in New York. His grandfather was one of the signers of the Declaration. He has been brought up in the midst of refined and scholarly people. He belongs to a set into which I cannot enter. I would give half that I am worth for his start in life."

In the meantime Mr. Crounse looked at the carriage and its sumptuous equipments, and thought, "If I had some of that man's money, how many comforts I could bring into our bare lives!"

Down one of the leafy avenues a man sauntered thoughtfully, whose name is known throughout the country as a brilliant magazinist.

One of the foremost men on Wall street rode past him. The men having met at the club, bowed to each other. "Ah," thought the novelist, "if I could live without writing anything but checks!"

"That fellow is famous!" thought Dives on horseback, with an envious sigh. He had in his pocket-book a yellow newspaper clipping in which his name occurred as having made a few remarks at a dinner. Dives thought of this clipping and said to himself, "What happiness it must be to see one's name in print every day! How much finer a gift than money is fame."

The minister's wife, whom somebody had taken out to drive, saw one of the parishoners pass, a woman who ruled in an exclusive fashionable clique. A thrill, almost of envy, disturbed her calm breast. How pleasant it must be to live in a social atmosphere pure and refined, to escape all that is vulgar and painful in life!

The other woman's eyes grew troubled as she looked wistfully into the serene face of the clergyman's wife.

"Oh, to have her faith!" she thought. "When sickness and death come, to know where to turn as she does! To live always apart from the worry and pain of the world, close to God!"

So each man and woman went on a separate way, envying the other. For the great mistake in life is, that each of us overrates the peculiar blessing which God has bestowed upon our brother, and is blind to the good which He has given to us.—*Youth's Companion.*

EIFFEL, the builder of the Paris tower, must find it difficult sometimes to live up to it.

Abstract Numbers.

It is not easy for children to conceive of numbers apart from sensible objects. For this reason our elementary books in arithmetic present pictures of the articles named. The child learns to add and subtract simply by counting. Such a practice has its place in instruction, but is apt to be carried too far. The result is the ridiculous habit of counting one's fingers in the work of arithmetic. The Wallachian peasant is said to perform all his multiplications above four times four by this method. It is evident from the word which we use for the several figures, digit, that they originally represented so many fingers.

This circumstance affords a reason for the decimal system of counting. The highest number that could be expressed by a show of fingers was ten. We know that an early system of counting was by fives, or by the single hand. Perhaps our duodecimal system of counting by twelve, or the dozen, grew out of the practice of counting the two hands together with the ten fingers.

The score, or twenty, was a primitive assemblage of fingers and toes. It came into use at a time when people went barefoot. The French use this method in forming their tens; four twenties is French for eighty. The word "score" came from the practice of notching a stick when one had counted to twenty. In the Maya dialects of Central America the word for twenty is the same as for man. It represented his value in mathematical calculations.

The Chiquito language of Bolivia has no numerals. The people cannot even count. Their minds cannot grasp the idea of number. The Papuans of Torres Strait have names only for one and two. The Bushmen of Australia count only to three. A recent traveller on the plains of Gran Chaco, in South America, met a chief who could not count his fingers. This illustrates pretty well the condition of the human mind in man's lowest state.

An early Greek writer on arithmetic says that "Agamemnon was so ignorant of the names of numbers as not to know that he had two feet." This statement was, no doubt, too strong, but it is clear that the idea of number came slowly to the Greek mind as compared with the idea of form.—*Youth's Companion.*

Very Funny.

An amusing device that produced unbounded fun for a party storm-bound in a small village, was what, to fit in with the prevailing nonsense of the plan, was called a "soiree musicale operetta." Early in the day each person selected some tune to which he sang, or tried to sing, everything he wished to say. Many were the slides, slurs and rolling "r's" required to make a request for a book or other article to fit the air of "Home, Sweet home," or a remark on the violence of the storm to fit the sweet cadences of "Annie Laurie." Particularly comical were the remarks of the "Red, White and Blue" man, who was much given to solemn utterances, quite out of keeping with the tune he had selected. A member of the party who had just received a letter from a friend of all, tried to give the news, which each was interested in. As the only tune he was capable of keeping (?) was "Old Hundred," the incongruities between its measures and the spicy extracts was more than amusing. So great was the success of the plan for that time, that the company adopted it later, on a number of evenings, always with the same success.

A Declining Custom.

"The pretty art of story telling is falling somewhat into disuse," complained a woman to a reporter the other day. "There are hundreds of well-ordered, rosy babies, who have never known the fascination of well-told fairy tales. Sometimes a good-natured nurse undertakes to explain the real, romantic meaning of the 'Sleeping Beauty' pictures, and such a maid gains a strong hold on the hearts of her young charges. Negro nurses are, for this reason, wonderfully adapted to nursery management, and usually beloved by the children. I believe it is the plain duty of every mother to amuse her little one in this way. Some mothers think it a bad practice, yet it seldom does harm for a mother to sit at the bedside of a tearful, wide-awake little one, and chant the thrilling story of the pig that would not go over the stile, till the fretful child is soothed into sleep."

"IT was merely a matter of taste," sighed the frustrated alligator when Sambo escaped with the loss of one toe.

UP TO SNUFF.

Growth of the Snuff-Taking Habit—The Etiquette of Snuffing.

A rather remarkable statement is going the rounds of the papers to the effect that the Catholic bishop of Massachussetts has forbidden the use of snuff, which has been so extensively adopted by the servant girls and factory operatives of that State that fifteen tons of of snuff are annually consumed by them is enough, one would think, for all the States of America. A representative of the *Post and Tribune*, alarmed by the view of the snuff-taking question, called on a well-known druggist and asked him if he had noticed any increase in the habit.

"I certainly have," he answered courteously; "five years ago we had about fifty customers who took snuff, and they were old people who had acquired the habit many years ago. Now we have over two hundred and new ones constantly coming."

"How do you account for it?"

"On purely medicinal grounds. This climate is full of catarrh and doctors order their patients to take catarrh snuff or to snuff salt and water up their nostrils, and so they get the habit of snuffing, and I believe it is good for catarrh."

"But what kind of snuff do they use?"

"The old-fashioned Scotch snuff Maccaboy or black snuff. It is put up in bladders or jars and sells for 6 or 8 cents an ounce or 75 cents a pound. I have a couple of customers who dip with it."

"That is the Southern way of using snuff, is it not?"

"These ladies are from the South; they have snuffing socials at their houses, and the guests sit in rows and dip long sticks into jars of snuff, then they rub it about their gums with a slow, sleepy motion, and it acts like a sedative."

Live and learn! The seeker after knowledge thanked the druggist and withdrew, pondering upon the fascinations of tobacco. A half century ago snuffing was a habit of aristocracy. Lords and dukes, kings and nobles carried costly snuff-boxes of the most exquisite design and workmanship, and honored their friends by proffering a "pinch." Some of these curious boxes can be found in Detroit to-day, jewelled and crested and gold-mounted, the name and armorial bearings of Lord Houghton being preserved on one which is a family heirloom. It would be a treat to see a couple of the old grandees meet, powdered and peruked, the lace ruffles falling over their fine white hands while the thumb and forefinger closed over the proffered snuff, and then insinuated it gently with many unctous sniffs and contortions into the covetous nose. It is told of a gentleman who visited Scotland where snuff is a natural luxury, that he had a very large nose, and at the inn where he lodged the host appreached and tendered him the hospitalities of the snuff-boxes.

"I never touch it," said the Englishman with supreme disdain.

"Weel, noo, that's a sair pity," answered the Scotch snuffer, gazing upon the stranger's prominent nose, "for ye have great accommodation for it!"

One man made a fortune by selling snuff and he wanted an inscription for a chariot he was about to set up. A wit suggested that, as it had been contributed by the noses of snuff-takers, that these lines would be appropriate:

"Who would have thought it,
That noses had bought it."

An old Scotch minister found himself once during a stormy period without any snuff; he was nearly distracted for he snuffed in liberal quantities, and he sent for the man of the manse and said: "Sandy, ye mon, get me some snuff this vera day."

Sure enough, Sandy bought him a quantity of snuff, and when he had inhaled it to his heart's content he turned ro the faithful serving man and asked: "Whaur did ye find it, Sandy?"

"It waur the drappings o' the pulpit," answered Sandy, coolly. "Ye waur aye wastin', an' I sweepit them up forbye, an' ye have it noo!"

There is a certain etiquette in snuff-taking which forbids a man to sneeze as if he were an amatuer in the business. An old gentleman was offered some strong snuff once and it so tickled his nose that he sneezed continuously, until at last, getting his breath, he gasped:

"Go on! Go on! Sneeze your d—d foolish head off, and I hope when you get through the old boy will treat you to gunpowder for being such a ninny!"

Among some of the quaint signs of the past century, was one over the door of a tobacconist, which read:

"We three
Brothers be
In one cause.
Tom puffs,
Billy snuffs,
And I chaws."

The Manufacture of Matches.

The operation of making matches from a pine log may be divided into four heads, viz., preparing the splints, dipping the matches, box-making, and filling. When the timber is brought into the cutting room of the factory it is seized upon by a gang of men, who place it before a circular saw, where it is cut into blocks fifteen inches long, which is the length of seven matches. It is then freed of its bark and taken to the turning-lathe, where, by means of a special form of fixed cutting-band running its entire length, a continuous tool, the thickness of a match is cut off. As the block revolves and decreases in diameter, the knife advances, and a band of veneer of uniform thickness is obtained. As the veneer rolls off the knife it is met by eight small knives, which cut it into seven separate bands, each the length of a match. By this one operation, seven long ribbons of wood, each the length and thickness of a match, are obtained. These are then broken into pieces six feet long, the knotty parts removed, and they are then fed into a machine which looks and acts like a straw-chopper, which cuts them into single matches. The machine cuts 150 bands at the same time, and a mechanical device pushes them forward the thickness of a match at each stroke of the cutter. This little machine with its one sharp knife can cut over 10,000,000 matches a day. From the cutting room the splints are taken to the dry room, where they are placed in revolving drums, which absorb all the moisture the splints may contain. They are then prepared for the dipping process, which is a very important operation, as each splint must have sufficient space to be fully coated, and yet not placed so close to the others as to cause the mixture to clot the heads of the other splints. To do this they are placed under an ingeniously constructed machine, which seems to work with almost human intelligence, and are caught up and placed closely, but at regular intervals, into a dipping frame. These frames contain forty-four movable laths, and between each lath the machine places, with clock-work regularity, fifty splints, making over 2,000 splints in each frame. The heads of the splints are all on the same level, and a single attendant at each machine can place over 1,000,000 splints in the frame per day. The dipping-vat is a stove of masonry, which contains three square pans. The first pan is for heating the splints so they will absorb the mixture, the second contains molten paraffine, in which the points are dipped, and in the third they are coated with the igniting composition. Over 8,000,000 matches can be dipped by a skillful workman in one day. After the dipping process, the matches are dried while in the frames, and are then taken to the packing-room, where they are put into boxes, by hand, ready for sale.—*The Woodworker.*

A Noted Woman.

A customer in one of the large Brooklyn dry goods stores stood waiting for her turn to be served and idly watching the woman who was claiming the attention of the clerk at the moment. There was nothing about her to attract a second glance. She looked to be close upon 60 years of age, her hair was very gray, though not white, and a pair of large, rather dark eyes looked out from a colorless, unimpressive face. In figure she was short and small, and the black costume she wore was simple to plainess. Yet, when she gave her name and address for a parcel to be sent, it was realized that this little woman of insignificant appearance was one whose name, 18 years ago, was in everybody's mouth from one end of the country to the other, and whose personality at that time was almost as well known as her name. She was Mrs. Theodore Tilton.

A LIVELY newspaper in a town will create great bustle and activity—especially bustle, if it falls into the hands of the ladies.